



Ephesians

Growing Up in Christ

Introduction

- In the previous section, Paul stressed the *unique* and united *nature* of God's plan
 - In this section he insists that we grow spiritually and live in a mature fashion
- It is a pleasure to watch a child grow through various stages of maturity, into adulthood
- The Lord designed the church to develop and function as a mature body
 - We must grow up in Christ and work together in the church

Gifts of Grace, 4:7-11

- ⁷But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says:
"When he ascended on high,
he led captives in his train
and gave gifts to men." ⁹(What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,

- Everyone in the church has been given an opportunity to serve
 - The grace of verse 7 is not saving grace, but the gift of service
 - It has to do with positions in the church
 - The quotation in verse 8 is from Psalm 68:18
 - A victorious king returns with captives and distributes gifts to loyal subjects
 - Christ's gifts of leadership and ministry are always for the selfless edifying of the body
 - These are never for one's personal glory
 - This is true of miraculous gifts and ordinary gifts

- Christ descended to earth and then ascended to heaven to bless mankind, 4:9-10
 - Jesus came to earth to die on the cross for us
 - His purpose: Matt. 20:28; Luke 19:10
 - He became the source of salvation to all who will obey, Heb. 5:8-9
 - He ascended back to heaven victorious over sin and death
 - Now his plan is being fulfilled
 - You and I fit into that plan as servants, ministers

Gearing Up for Service, 4:11-13

- ¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- Christ gave positions of *foundation* ministry and *maintenance* ministry
 - The *apostles* and *prophets* were key figures in the beginning of the church
 - The apostles were the only preachers for quite a while
 - NT prophets joined them as inspired teachers
 - Together, they helped get the church going
 - *Evangelists, pastors, and teachers* were left to spread the word and strengthen the church in every generation
 - These are uninspired, yet crucial positions of service

- A key role of leadership is that of *equipping* others to serve
 - Leadership should share responsibility and influence with trusted, faithful members
 - Some like to be coach, cheerleader, quarterback, and receiver
 - Every Christian is a minister (servant) of God in his or her own way
 - If leadership fails to make use of the talents of the members, growth will be stifled and people will be discontent
 - Involvement leads to spiritual maturity and the increase of the body

Growing Up in Christ, 4:14-16

- ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- Those who do not grow spiritually are in grave danger, 4:14
 - One who never matures beyond spiritual infancy is more susceptible to error
 - It is easy for little ones to become sick
 - How valuable is the immunization program
 - We need stability in the windy, rushing waters of life
 - False doctrines will always be blowing through
 - Grow up in knowledge and understanding, or risk being caught up in the latest religious fad

- We must *speak the truth in love*, 4:15
 - The word *truth* is used as an action word, a verb
 - Literally it says “truthing in love”
 - Let us both *act* and *speak* truth at all times
 - Jesus began to “do and teach,” Acts 1:1
 - *Love* is the environment needed for church growth
 - “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”

- We must grow up in Christ in numerous ways
 - In knowledge
 - 1 Peter 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14
 - Learn the word and how to handle it accurately, 2 Tim. 2:15
 - In behavior
 - 1 Cor. 13:11, “I put childish ways behind me”
 - Grow beyond childish rivalry, temper, etc.
 - In responsibility
 - Christians must learn to shoulder responsibility and to work without praise

- Let us all give support to the Lord's body
 - A healthy body works together in unison, unselfishly
 - Let us all do our part
 - If you cannot be a support to the local body, please do not be a hindrance
 - Be a blessing, not a blight

In Conclusion

- Are you allowing the Lord to use you in building up the body of Christ
- Do you need to be restored to faithful service?
- Do you need to obey the gospel to become a part of the body?